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U.S. Food distribution administration
OUR MILK SUPPLIES

Broadcast by Wm. C. Welden, Assistant Chief, Dairy and Poultry Branch, Food Distribution Administration, and Wallace L. Kadderly, in the Department of Agriculture portion of the National Farm and Home Hour, Tuesday, August 31, 1943, over stations associated with the Blue Network.

KADDERLY: A problem that many people have to face today is the one of milk supplies....it affects milk producers....milk handlers...consumers...everybody who has anything to do with milk...and that means most of us. I've asked a man to come here today who can tell you many things I think you'd like to know about milk supplies....and about the dairy problem generally. He's William C. Welden, Assistant Chief of the Dairy and Poultry Branch of War Food Administration. Bill, first of all..tell us why in some parts of the country there are serious milk shortages.

WELDEN: Well, Wallace there are several reasons. It takes a lot of labor to get milk and milk products to consumers...transportation is a major factor too...weather conditions in certain areas have affected the feed supply...and one of the main reasons for shortages is the increased demand in many parts of the country.

KADDERLY: Increased demand...that's a cause of many of our wartime shortages. Increased income is behind that demand, of course. It's only natural for people to buy more food when they have more money.

WELDEN: You might be interested to know how big an increase there has been in the amount of fluid milk and cream people use in this country. It's more than 20 percent above the amount used in 1941 and still going up. This has resulted in a critical situation with regard to the manufacture of milk products...butter, cheese, ice cream, evaporated milk and skim milk powder.

KADDERLY: I don't suppose the average homemaker, who may have increased her milk delivery several quarts a week, realizes that this extra buying of milk has an effect on the amount of butter or cheese she can buy at the grocery.

WELDEN: Probably not...and I'm sure she doesn't realize what lengths the milk industry has gone to in its efforts to meet the demand for milk. Right here in Washington in recent weeks, for instance, the organized producers and milk distributors have been trying to make arrangements to get more milk from areas outside the Washington milkshed. Washington's population has reached a new high during the past year or so...and what's happening here is happening in many other parts of the country.

KADDERLY: All areas where there are big war plants are using tremendous quantities of milk...we know that.

WELDEN: Yes, and getting the milk into those areas is one of the greatest of the problems. There's a limit to the distance milk and cream can be shipped in cans, by truck. A longer haul is possible, of course, for tank trucks and tank cars, which are better refrigerated. It isn't always possible to find enough trucks and tank cars, however...and, as you probably know, there's occasionally a shortage of ice to contend with.

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KADDERLY: There are many problems on fluid milk...but let's get back to the question of the manufactured milk products. It's mighty important for civilians to be provided with at least the minimum requirements of butter, cheese, canned milk, and such foods.

WELDEN: You're right about that Wallace...and under present circumstances, with milk handlers outbidding each other to get producers to deliver milk to them... competition between markets for supplies, and all that, the marketing of fluid milk has been upset. And, with the coming of fall and winter, the season when milk supplies naturally decline, the present situation is likely to become more serious.

KADDERLY: From now through the winter, is always the season of low milk production...and, as long as people have their present purchasing power, and don't have as many things to spend their money for, we can expect the demand for milk and cream and all other food to remain very strong...We can be sure of that. But there's a limit to the amount of milk dairymen can produce. In view of these facts, how are we going to make sure that the manufacturers of milk products do get enough milk and cream?

WELDEN: Well, Wallace, we're working on a program right now to do this very thing. The primary idea back of such a plan is to prevent a further rise in fluid milk consumption...not necessarily a cut back on consumption. Preventing an increase in consumption of fluid milk is vital if we are to maintain production of butter and cheese, and other essential dairy products. The program isn't far enough advanced yet for me to discuss it further right now. However, I think our listeners would like to know that an order is being issued today, reducing the percentage of butter which producers must set aside for Government use. Effective September 1st, only 20 percent of the September production of butter must be set aside, instead of the 30 percent which originally was required under the Government's set-aside order. Furthermore, the 30 percent set-aside for October has been completely eliminated.

KADDERLY: Let's see...that original order required every manufacturer making more than 12,000 pounds of butter in any month since January 1942, to set aside 30 percent of the butter production for essential wartime needs, didn't it?

WELDEN: Yes, and remember, the order was written so that the percentage could be adjusted periodically. Therefore, during May, June and July, the months of peak production, the set-aside quotas were raised to 50 percent. This was done so that the Government could meet its war requirements with the least possible effect on civilian supplies. Through this heavy summer buying we have built up a stock of more than 200 million pounds of butter to meet war needs through the winter. This meant that the set-aside percentage could be lowered to 30 percent again on August 1st, and that it's coming down still more now, to 20 percent...and furthermore, that the Government can stop buying butter entirely through the fall and winter months.

KADDERLY: And you say that the Government won't buy any of the butter manufactured during October, Bill?

WELDEN: That's right...it's expected that after September 30th, no butter will be set aside until production begins to pick up again.

KADDERLY: That means, then, that civilians will receive just about all the butter that's made during the fall and winter.

WELDEN: Yes, Wallace, that's true...but I think all of us should keep in mind that those fall and winter months are the months of low production. Consumers should remember that elimination of the set-aside will have the affect more of maintain-
ing supplies than of increasing them.

KADDERLY: Thank you very much, Bill, for this explanation of the reasons for some of our milk supply problems, and for the news about the lowering of the butter set-aside percentage. Farm and Home friends, you've heard William C. Welden, Assistant Chief of the Dairy and Poultry Branch, War Food Administration.

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